

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 NIC-*1 OMB-01 DRC-*1 ?096 W

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R 030920Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 172

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 0127

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT,ID

SUBJECT: SUMITRO DENIES HE WILL REPLACE SUHARTO

1. SUMMARY: IN COMMENTS TO REPORTERS JANUARY 2, KOPKAMTIB CHIEF SUMITRO STRONGLY DENIED "VICIOUS" RUMORS THAT HE OR SOMEONE ELSE WOULD REPLACE SUHARTO AS PRESIDENT IN APRIL 1974, AND THREATENED STERN ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO TRY TO "PLAY LEADERS OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER". GENERAL SUMITRO'S REMARKS WERE APPARENT ATTEMPT TO REAFFIRM HIS LOYALTY TO SUHARTO AND DISCOURAGE SUPPORTERS WHO SEE HIM AS MORE CCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SUHARTO. FOLLOWING BASED ON PRESS REPORTS JANUARY 3. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. SUMITRO'S DENIAL THAT HE OR ANYONE ELSE WOULD REPLACE SUHARTO WAS MADE IN IMPROMPTU COMMENTS TO REPORTERS AS HE LEFT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT JANUARY 2. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT ALI MURTOPO AND BAKIN CHIEF SUTOPO JUWONO, WHO ALSO AT NDED MEETING.

3. SUMITRO DENOUNCED RUMORS PREDICTING THAT SUHARTO
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WOULD BE REPLACED BY HIM, OR, ACCORDING TO OTHER VERSIONS,

BY ALI MURTOPO IN APRIL 1974. HE CALLED SUCH RUMORS "FOUL, VICIOUS AND OUTRAGEOUS (KETERLALUAN)", AND WARNED THAT SUCH EFFORTS TO PLAY OFF LEADERS AGAINST EACH OTHER WERE HARMFUL TO UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT. RUMORS ALSO CHALLENGED CONSTITUTION AND LAWS UNDER WHICH SUHARTO WAS ELECTED TO SECOND FIVE YEAR TERM BY MAR IN 1973, HE SAID.

4. SUMITRO NOTED PRESIDENT SUHARTO HIMSELF HAS OFTEN SAID THAT INDONESIAN HISTORY PROVES THAT "THOSE WHO SEEK POWER DO NOT WIN IT; THOSE WHO PREPARE THEMSELVES FAIL; AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE THEY WILL BECOME LEADERS ARE KICKED OUT". SUMITRO SAID HE DID NOT WANT PEOPLE TO THINK HE WAS "PLAYING GAMES."

5. SUMITRO SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHO WAS PROMOTING THE FALSE RUMORS, BUT HE THOUGHT THEY ORIGINATED AT THE TIME OF HIS RECENT DIALOGUE WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN YOGYAKARTA AND SURABAYA. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE INTENDS TO FIND OUT, AND HE THREATENED TO TAKE STERN MEASURES AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE.

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6. COMMENT: PERSISTENT RUMOR THAT SUMITRO ASPIRES TO PRESIDENCY HAS BEEN PROMOTED PRIVATELY BY REFORM-MINDED ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS, WHO SEE HIM AS MORE PALATABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SUHARTO. ALTHOUGH SUMITRO HAS INDEED MOVED TOWARD CLOSER IDENTIFICATION WITH YOUTH AND REFORMIST CAUSE IN RCENT MONTHS, AVAILABLE EVIDENCE INDICATES HE REMAINS STEADFAST IN SUPPORT FOR SUHARTO AND UNITY OF ABRI. HE IS DOUBTLESS EMBARRASSED BY RUMORS PRESENTING HIM AS CHALLENGER TO PRESIDENT, AND THUS FELT NEED TO SCOTH SUCH RUMORS AND REAFFIRM LOYALTY TO SUHARTO. GALBRAITH

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